



Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we enclose for your review the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper: Amendment 39 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico [RIN 0648-BD25].

This DEIS is prepared pursuant to NEPA to assess the environmental impacts associated with NOAA proceeding with regulatory action being considered by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The purpose of this action is to provide flexibility in the management of the recreational sector's harvest of red snapper by restructuring the federal fishery management strategy to allow for the regional variation of management measures, and modifying accountability measures for recreational overages to better account for biological, social, and economic differences among the regions of the Gulf of Mexico. By establishing regional management through delegation or a conservation equivalency approach, the States would have the ability to tailor the management measures to address the regional differences in the fishery.

The DEIS analyzes the effects of a range of alternatives to implement regional management through delegation or conservation equivalency, maintaining or ending sector separation, establishing regions, modifying the federal minimum size limit for red snapper, allowing closures in federal waters adjacent to the regions, apportioning the recreational quota among regions, and modifying post-season accountability measures.

Additional copies of the DEIS may be obtained electronically from the Responsible Program Official identified below through Cynthia Meyer at Cynthia.Meyer@noaa.gov. The document is also accessible electronically from the Southeast Regional Office Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, or the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Written comments should be submitted through mail or via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. Search "NOAA-NMFS-2013-0078". Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. Written comments submitted during the agency's 45-day public comment period must be received by February 1, 2016. When submitting mailed comments, include the following document subject identifier: Comments on Amendment 39.



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Sincerely,

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Enclosure